



# Caste – annihilation of Meena Kandasamy Poems

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## Abstract

As a Dalit writer, MeenaKandasamy focuses on caste annihilation, feminism and linguistic identity. One of her the first poetry collection, ‘Touch’ - was published in August 2006, with foreword by Kamala Das. It was translated into five different languages upon publication. Touch presents the text as a double edged sword before the readers. Kandasamy dedicates this part of Touch to address Dalit issues.Kandasamy’s another poem “We will rebuild worlds” is a powerful and soul string poem. She boldly reveals out against discrimination on caste color race and gender.Firmly this poem brings out to our mind the various honor killings that have tried to catch the attention of country.

## Keywords

annihilation, Meena Kandasamy, Poems.

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## 1. Introduction

Kandasamy has written many essays on the drudgery of casteism and its consequences. All of her works her poetry speak the loudest and is filled with fire as it brings out the anger in the hearts of the downtrodden communities. ‘Dalit literature’ is mingled with Indian as it is a byproduct on evil caste system that existed for many years in this county. Though the constitution of India has abolished the caste system, if still lingers in many walks of life with its grasps as firm as ever on the minds of its people. It may be compared with the slavery in American and apartheid in Africa. The literature that arises as on outburst against casteism is Dalit literature. Meena Kandasamy’s writings come from these margins of the caste code dedicated for many centuries.She uses her voice not only to expose the atrocities faced by the Dalits, but also to represent the anger that boils within them as a reaction to these prejudices.

## 2. Discussion

Although Meena Kandasamy portrays the Dalits and her poetry deals with love poems, championing the social rights the poet, demands, she depicts both the subjugation by caste and gendera double bondage.

Meena Kandasamy’s other themes of her poetry is not only discrimination against women religious beliefs, superstitions and political intrusions among others. Each poem in her collection tells us a new of woe and worry of the Dalits and women. This paper elicits the themes of Dalits sufferings and the reactions that it evokes in them, as portrayed in MeenaKandasamy’s poems.

The poet unleashes her words to harness the power of language and boils it down to the bare facts that tell aloud the tales of many silences. In her poem ‘Touch’, she addresses the basic sense of touch and the pleasures that it is associated with her own problem. To any person who has not been subjugated by the discrimination, the sense of touch only brings pleasure. Kandasamy contrasts these pleasant feelings to the harsh reality faced by dalits, purely from the very same sense organs. The skin – “Amidst all that pervading emptiness touch retained its sensuality.

Race prejudices and the color of the skin are juxtaposed with pleasant association of the skin in touch:

..... or, you may recollect how a gentle touch, a caress changed your life multifold and you were never the person you should have been. feelings with your skin, was perhaps the first of the senses, its reality always remained with you. you never gotrid of it. you will have known this. you will have known almost every knowledgeable thing about the charms and the temptations that touch could hold.(Touch 24-36)

‘Touch’ is the most elementary of sensation which a human- being has bestowed with; even in a meditation a religious man closes his eyes, ears and nose, it is the sense of touch which keeps him connected with this word. This feeling

of touch is perhaps the first of sense and no one can get rid of it. The same feelings of touch are thought to be a taboo when it tries to transgress the compartmentalization of caste.

The title itself is replete with multi-farious significances that not only “touch” upon aesthetic consideration and sensual human bonds of affection or desire but also refers to the rigid hierarchies of caste which had rendered thousands of Indians untouchable by birth and thus relegated them to a sub-human level as their mere touch was considered to be polluting to members of the upper caste. Yet, the entire Brahmanical scriptural philosophy is also fraught on the other hand, with innumerable indictments of physical, corporeal existence which is bound of decayed and the concomitant privileging of man’s spiritual being, away from all tactile consideration. It is this hypocritical contradiction within the entire discourse of Brahmanical Hindu philosophy which Kandasamy scrupulously highlights as she states: But, you will never have known that touch- the taboo to yours transcendence, when crystallized in caste was paraphernalia of? undeserving hate. (Touch 37-42)

The male Brahman addressee is thus made aware of the fact that despite all his persistent attempt to transcend touch, it remains the undeniable everyday reality for thousands of people who are humiliated, discriminated against violently subjugated precisely by those Brahmanically encoded hierarchies of caste that make “touch” indeed a matter of life and death.

Meena Kandasamy’s ‘We will Rebuild Worlds’ boldly reveals out against casteism, racism and sexism which still exist in mindsets in India and around the world. In spite of constitution guaranteeing citizens freedom from all sorts of discrimination. In this poem, she especially touches upon the topic of suppression of Dalit people which still exists in villages in India and hardly touches the headlines. She talks about the hope for a new dawn which is slowly emerging in young India after the carnage of centuries of feudal and decadent systems which has wounded the deep ethos and character of the entire fabric of India.

The following line reveals the painful existence of a ruthless system which is even now present in pockets of rural India. “electrocuted children to instant death because they played in your well”. We will rebuild worlds- The cruelty inflicted by greedy and selfish Landowners in rural India is poignantly depicted here.

The difference of perspective is highlighted once more, where it is only in death that love can be perfected. The comparison is drawn between caste and Death. It appears as if love transcends caste is a mightier deed than that love that transcends death sarcasm is her weapon here Kandasamy asserts that not allowing a woman to choose her partner is a kind of suppression. If the system does not allow a woman to marry a man because he is from another caste, like Honor Killings, Kandasamy asks the upper caste in his poem ‘We will Rebuild Worlds’ ‘Poured poison and pesticide through the ears- nose- mouth /or hanged them in public/ because a man and woman. dared to love And you wanted/ to teach/ other

boys and other girls/the Lesson of /how to /whom to/ where to / continue Their caste lines (16-23) Meena Kandasamy focuses her inner opinion in these poems “Touch”, “we will Rebuild World”. In her two poems she talks about Casteism, untouchability, and outcast. She stresses her views about poor people. Sophisticated people and social cheaters are degrading the lower people. In her each and every poem, she supports to paupers and poor.

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